/71 cont'd/

533 poor ones cannot help being laughed at. Singing is an indispensable talent for the Miao in their social relations.

(2)

Their songs differ according to locality, and in general can be divided into two groups in accordance with two different styles, i.e., the free songs without set words and songs with fixed words. Generally speaking, the love songs and other songs of pleasure or sorrow are mostly of the former group, and every singer is a spontaneous composer. They sing what they feel at the moment.

533 The formal songs, which are sung at wedding feasts, in re-
571 ligious ceremonies, or between hosts and guests, are of the latter group with fixed texts and are uniform throughout the Miao area. These are not natural outflows of feeling but rather songs of still formality. Everyone can recite these by heart without requirement of talent. The free songs, however, are more flexible; whether the song is good or poor depends upon the talent of the individual singer.

Because the free songs have no fixed texts and because of language difficulties, we did not record them, which is a pity. However, there were copies of the fixed songs in almost every Miao family, as they are taught from generation to generation. We had a chance to collect a few samples. But they were all stiffly formalized. Hence, as far as artistic value is concerned, they can hardly be compared with the free songs cited before which were natural expressions of feelings.

533 /72/ Every aspect of the Miao life is expressed in singing.
● 536 The contents of their songs are, therefore, complex, multi-faceted, and all-comprehensive. We did not succeed in acquiring many of these songs. We shall now attempt to classify here those we did get:

(1) Songs relating to economic life, such as those sung during certain ceremonies in the process of ploughing or harvesting:

/88 cont'd/

533 We have copied a great many of the Miao songs above. These songs, because they have been made rigid through writing, have lost their original freshness and spontaneity. Moreover, the errors the Miao made in /89/ writing them out have rendered the songs sometimes almost unreadable. It is a great pity that the real charm and wit displayed in Miao songs cannot be appreciated from the pages here!

(3)

538 152 The moods conveyed to us by Miao songs, when they were sung, were not those of loftiness and tragedy, but rather those of tenderness and delicate pathos. There are many breaks in the singing, but the tune during these breaks merely lengthens and weakens, the lingering sounds of the music not breaking off. Thus, it takes a 533 fairly long time to finish the singing of each song. Those songs which are sung as counterparts are started first by one in a group of persons. He stops at the end of the fourth line, and the opposite party will continue the singing with an answering part for another four lines. Then the first singer will pick up the singing again. In this manner, the singing is kept on with every four lines sung alternately by the two opposing parties. The form of Miao songs, as can be seen from the examples given above, is of two kinds: One kind has seven characters to a line. Most of the Miao songs are of this kind. The other kind has three-character lines alternating regularly with seven-character lines. Because of the difference in form, these two groups of songs are sung in different ways, which will be illustrated here. For example, in the singing of a song of 533 the first kind, take the following words:

539 "Jen hua tu ch'uan pu k'an shui, yin chiu t'an to yeh shih hsien."

/People will say that like rowing a boat while ignoring the water, drinking as much as one wants is a waste./ (Excerpt from a Miao song). They are sung in the following manner:

(The dash between the words indicates the lengthened, carried-over tones from the preceding words).

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533 Every two lines in this kind of song also constitute one unit. If seven-character lines follow in the sequence, singing will be done in the manner of singing songs composed of seven-character lines.

This is all that we know about the ways Miao songs are sung. If there are other ways of singing them, we are not aware of them at present.

(4)

538 The legends of the Miao may be divided into two classes: One comprises those which are indigenous, and the other comprises those which have been introduced from outside. This distinction is immediately apparent when we take a look at the contents of the legends. Moreover, the legends may be divided into two classes from the point of view of form: those which have the same form as the songs, and those which do not. The legends with the same form as the songs are either the texts of the civilian and military Taoist priests, or the various songs for social occasions. These are easily available, since they have been written down. As regards those legends which are not in song form, they have been handed down entirely through oral transmission, and collecting them is difficult.

Of those legends which are indigenous, the most interesting are the ones which explain the process of the creation of heaven and earth and the origin of their ancestors. Two of this kind will be recorded as follows: 539 773

(a) The Little Girl of Fu-chi Sings:
You, drummer, beat the drum of Yang-shou;
Beat the drum again and again.
Hark! The drum is turned to Yang —
The little girl of Fu-chi arrives at the center of the aerials:
Earlier you were at Fu-sang Temple.
The kung-ts'ao /"merit official"/ was ordered to send you an invitation.
At the invitation of your masters,
You rode on the royal horse and came to the site of the altar.

/100 cont'd/

539 Who (Emperor P'ing) proposed the use of go-betweens?
173 As for Emperor P'an ... how many daughters?
Then he beckoned /for marriage into his family/ what young men of how many (five) surnames?
The first daughter married what (Teng) surname?
The second daughter married what (Chiang) family's young man?
The third daughter married what (Chao) surname?
The fourth daughter married what (Li) family's young man?
The fifth daughter married what (The family register is unclear) surname?
In the world today what is the custom for union? (Marriage)
The first daughter took care of her father for how many years?
The second daughter took care of her father for how many springs?
The fifth daughter took care of her father for how many years?
In the world today how are parents cared for?
The fifth daughter respectfully cared for them
And her parents lived a long time for many springs.
Her kindness was exalted and endless.
The record even though unclear mentions this and tells us about it.
Emperor P'an in his lifetime lived how many (Five hundred) years?
Graciously added to his life were how many (Sixty) springs?
/101/ Talk of ancient days are endless;
Let's urge the dragon to go to the feast before us.

533 Because these historical legends are all rhymed songs made of
538 lines of seven words each, they are frequently sung: The first, (a),
173 is sung by the Taoist priests during the "tso chai" ceremony. The next two, (b) and (c), are sung at wedding feasts with groups of men and women as the opposing singing parties. Interestingly, the contents of these legends provide answers to questions related to the origin of mankind, such as the creation of heaven and earth, the calamity of

/101 cont'd/

533 the flood, the coming into existence of mankind, the life story of
538 P'an Ku /The Creator/, the evolutionary process of social systems,
173 and the origin of their ancestors, etc. Moreover, there is another interesting legend of the Miao which tells the story of their ancestors. This is not in song form. It is given here as follows:

539 Once upon a time there lived a certain wealthy man who had a
773 daughter. But the wealthy man's daughter was betrothed to an extremely poor family. When she was of marriageable age, she still was not yet married. It so happened that the daughter had a pet dog. She was so fond of her dog that she ate and slept with him. In time she had sexual relations with the dog and became pregnant. When her fiance's family became aware of this, they informed the authorities. The official investigated the case from many angles, but failed to identify the party who had wronged her. Eventually, the official's wife thought of a scheme. She took the daughter out of jail and took the girl to live with her in her own room. In the middle of night when the daughter was fast asleep, the official's wife opened up the girl's clothes and found marks of scratches by dog claws on her body. The whole mystery was thus unveiled. Thereupon the district official questioned the members of the girl's family. It was found that the girl actually had a pet dog. He then ordered that this dog be taken to be with the girl at the jail. Sure enough when night fell, the dog was actually found to scratch fiercely at the girl. The whole case was thus solved. When the fiance's family learned that the girl had had relations with the dog and had thus become pregnant, they cancelled the betrothal unconditionally. After being released from jail, the girl soon gave birth to a boy and a girl. Greatly disgraced by this scandal, the girl's parents ordered a carpenter to build a boat and loaded it with gold, silver, gems, and pearls. The daughter, dog, and the two children were driven into the boat and set afloat. The boat floated about and drifted to the city of Hui-chou, where it was caught and pulled to land by some people. Then the four of them settled in this city. The dog often went to the mountains to capture birds and animals to feed the two children. The children gradually grew up but still did not know

/101 cont'd/

539 they were children of a dog. One day /102/ when the dog, feeling
773 lazy, did not go to the mountains to hunt, he was beaten by the two children. Upon this, their mother scolded them severely and told them the truth. She said that they were born of her union with the dog and that the dog was in fact their father. She further told them that since they were children of a dog, nobody would ever want to marry them. It was thus wise that they should marry each other in order to continue the line. After the brother and sister were married, they had two boys. When they grew up, the two boys were not able to get along with each other and often quarreled. Their mother became disgusted and drove them out. One fled up to the mountain, and the other down to the sea. The one who went up the mountain became the ancestor of the Miao; the one who went down to the sea became the ancestor of the Tanka /boat people of Canton/. Henceforth, the descendants of these two groups have not walked on the prince's land nor paid taxes.

773 This legend gives us a picture of how the ancestors of the Miao were symbolically conceived of by them (i.e., born of a dog), what kind of economic life they led at the beginning (i.e., hunting), and what kind of marriages between those of the same blood originally existed among them (i.e., marriage between brother and sister), and also what the relationship between the two groups, Miao and Tanka, was like, etc. What important implications all this revealed to us in our study of the Miao social system!

●538 As regard to the legends which were brought to the Miao from outside, these are numerous. Due to limited space here, only the following sample, which consists of a section of the sad and romantic story of a Mr. Yen Hui and a Miss Chang Meng-wo is given here:

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The Ancient Song of Meng-wo

Speaking at leisure of old tales and books,
Let me sing the story of Meng-wo.
Thousands of other old tales have been told over and over again,
Let me sing now the story of Meng-wo:

/110 cont'd/

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Then they bought a long plank of wood,
For Meng-wo to be put upon.
/111/ When the Taoist priests had finished the funeral ceremony,
Husband and wife were sent up the hillside.
They were carried over the Yellow River with nine turns.
They were carried over the Yellow River with nine turns.
On the left there was the Green Dragon, on the right the White Tiger.
From behind the Jade Goddess protects their grave site.
In front the scarlet bird* comes to pay its respects.

/* A position in geomancy./

At the back were fierce tigers facing spotted leopards.
Sing to the end the ancient tale of Meng-wo.
So that it will be spread over the five lakes and the four seas.

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In addition to the above, there are the Song of San Pe Ying T'ai /"the three heroic elders"/, the Song of Chiu Niang /"the three girls"/, the Song of T'ang Hsien Chang Shih Niang /"the ten women of T'ang Hsien Chang"/, the Song of Mai Ch'en, etc. All of them are well engraved in the heart of every Miao. Because they are all lengthy pieces, space does not permit us to include them in the present report.

/112/ Chapter IX. Intergroup Relations between the Chinese, the Li, and the Miao.

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The Chinese constitute the majority of the inhabitants of Hainan Island. Next are the Li and the Miao. The intergroup relationship of the three ethnic groups—the Chinese, the Li, and the Miao, particularly the first two—has constituted an /important/ part of the history of Hainan, and naturally it still will be at the core of problems

/135 cont'd/

554 793 baby who was held during the ceremony; and one as a military priest, also very young. All these children were qualified to become Taoist priests after undergoing this baptismal rite and could perform the duties of priests when they reached manhood. In the evening these children practiced the dances of Taoist priests on the grass, their steps being accompanied by the sound of drums and gongs. The uniformity of their steps and the agility of their movements amazed me and made me think what a pity it was that these bright youngsters were being properly educated when they showed such unmistakable promise!

Second month, twenty-eighth day. (Sunday)

538 In the morning we copied many different Miao songs and legends, one of which depicted the story of a romance between Mr. Yan Hui and Miss Chang Chiu-niang. The way in which the story made fun of the saints and followers impressed me, but the origin of the story was untraceable and would be interesting to study further.

765 In the evening the tso-chai ceremony was completed. The military priests put on a last, short act, the t'iao kuei ("dancing demon"). One priest played the role of the demon with a mask on, /136/ which looked hideous. Hidden behind a screen, he was lured out by two boys disguised as girls. Seeing the "girls," the demon became wild and erected his penis, measuring some two or three ch'ih in length (made of a bundle of straw). Leaping wildly left and right, he chased after the "girls." It was an extremely obscene act.

Third month, first day. (Monday)

533 527 In the morning Headman Lu prepared a rich banquet at his home for all the priests. The hostess appeared to express thanks to the priests one by one in words and songs. The priests, likewise, sang in their turn, creating an atmosphere of harmony and hospitality at the feast.

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212 173 their lives. Before they managed to get back again on the bank, they swallowed a great deal of water, and with the water they swallowed all the characters they knew, and have been without characters ever since! This may be regarded as an historical romance with a basis of fact. They did move west away from the Chinese, and the sheet of water was doubtless the Tungting Lake. But are we to gather from it that there was a time when they had some characters, but have since forgotten them?

• 538 If the Miao have no literature, they have plenty of legends handed down from earlier times. Who composed these legends no one knows; they are taught by the older people to the girls and boys. Many of them are in verse, five syllables to a line, the stanzas being of unequal length, one stanza interrogative and one responsive. These are sung or recited at their festivals by two persons or two groups, generally one group of young men and one group of young women, one group interrogating and the other responding. Among these legends, which I have written down from the dictation of my Heh Miao teacher, is a story of the Creation and a story of the Flood. The story of Creation commences:

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Who made heaven and earth?
Who made insects?
Who made men?
Made male and made female?
I who speak don't know.

Vang-vai (Heavenly King) made heaven and earth.
Zie-ne made insects.
Zie-ne made men and demons,
Made male and made female.
How is it you don't know?

How made heaven and earth?
How made insects?
How made men and demons?
Made male and made female?
I who speak don't know.

Heavenly King is (or was) intelligent.
Spat a lot of spittle into his hand,
Clapped his hands with a noise,
Produced heaven and earth.
Tall wild grass made insects.
Stones made men and demons.
Made male and made female.
How is it you don't know?

Made heaven in what way?
Made earth in what way?
Thus by rote I sing,
But don't understand.

Made heaven like a sun-hat.
Made earth like a dust-pan.
Why don't you understand?
Made heaven a single lump,
Made earth a single lump.

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Who put heaven up?
Heaven then so very high.
Who separated earth low down?
Earth then deep and low.
I sing and don't understand.

The poem then goes on to relate how heaven and earth were kept apart after they were separated. They tried all sorts of wood and all sorts of metal, and at length decided to prop up heaven with pillars made of silver. But where were they to get fire to melt the silver? Fire had gone up to heaven; how were they to bring it down? Fire eventually came down from heaven in a stone, and with raw steel and tinder they extracted the fire from the stone. After heaven had been propped up with silver pillars, the sun and moon and milky-way were fixed in their places. The sun, however, went away and would not come back. Thereupon they sent various beasts and birds to call the sun to return, but they would not go; or if they went, the sun refused to come at their call. Finally, they sent the cock to call the sun to return, and when the cock crew the sun came back. The poem concludes that the proof of this is that when the cock crows the sun rises!

"Heavenly King" is a translation of *Vang-*

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773 down into the valley, he showed her the two knives in the scabbard and she finally consented to be his wife. In course of time a child was born to them without any limbs. A-Zie was very angry, and taking a big knife killed the child, chopped it to bits, and scattered the bits all over the hill-side. Next morning they discovered that these pieces had all changed into men and women, and thus the earth was repeopled.

Part of this legend may, as an illustration of all, be given in a rough translation of the Metric Version:

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Zie demanded his sister in marriage,
His sister spoke,
Spoke how?
Thus by rote I sing,
Still don't understand.

Then his sister spoke,
You want to marry your sister;
Lift up a millstone each opposite,
Let go to roll to the valley;
(If) they roll and make one,
You marry your sister.
If the stones rest apart in the valley,
(We) both go and rest in our own place.
So his sister spoke,
Spoke words thus,
Why don't you understand?

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Let the stones go into the valley;
Did the stones then make one (or)
Did the stones rest apart?
I who sing don't know.

The stones rested apart.
Zie contrived wickedly,
Put stones in the valley,
Called his sister to come
To see the stones become one.
A-Zie then spoke,
Now we two will marry,
Spoke words thus,
Why don't you understand?

His sister again spoke,
Spoke words nicely,
How did she speak?
Thus by rote I sing,
Still don't understand.

His sister again spoke,
Take knives each on a separate hill,
Throw the knives into the valley;
(If they) enter into one sheath,
We two will marry.
(If) the knives rest apart,
We will rest apart.
So his sister spoke,
Spoke words thus,
Why don't you understand?

A-Zie then hit on a plan,
Made up his mind what to do,
He would have his sister for wife.
Thus by rote I sing,
Still don't understand.

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A-Zie then hit on a plan,
He made his heart wicked,
Made two pairs of knives,
He placed knives in the valley,
(They) rested apart.
Threw and went into the grass,
(He) called his sister to come
To see the two knives in a pair.
Now we two will marry,
He would have his sister for wife,
Why don't you understand?

Would have his sister for wife,
The two returned home.
Who did they ask (about it)?
Commanded what?
So the two got married.
Thus by rote I sing,
Still don't understand.

So the two returned home,
And asked their Mother,
Their Mother then said,
Heaven has no people,
Earth has no people,
You two must marry.
Kill buffaloes, kill cows, receive guests,
Hang meat on the branches of the "Zan" tree,
Call your brother cousin,[1]
Hang meat on the branches of the "Ma sang" tree,
Call your Mother mother-in-law,
So their Mother spoke,
Spoke words thus,
And the two got married.
Why don't you understand?

[1] Not a human being but a genius or fairy; the same with the guests.

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So the two got married,
Afterwards they had a child,
Had a child, what sort?
Thus by rote I sing,
Still don't understand.

Afterwards they had a child,
Had a child like a hammer,
Why don't you understand?

They had a child which had no arms or legs—this is why they say it was like a hammer.

Had a child like a hammer,
Zie saw, did Zie love it?
Thus by rote I sing,
Still don't understand.

Zie saw and did not love it,
Zie saw and Zie got angry,
Why don't you understand?

A-Zie was full of anger,
Took the child and did what?
Thus by rote I sing,
Still don't understand.

A-Zie was full of anger,
Zie drew out a great knife,
Took the child and chopped it up,
Why don't you understand?

Zie took the child and chopped it up,
Where did he throw (the pieces)?
Flesh went and got a name,
What did they become and what were they called?
Thus by rote I sing,
Still don't understand.

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He sowed them on the hill,
In the morning they became people,
Thus they got a name,
What they became so they were called,
Why don't you understand?

773 Mr. H. J. Hewitt had the same story told him, in a different way, by the Hua Miao. Years ago they told me their story, but I did not write it down; so here is Mr. Hewitt's version.

According to this, two brothers ploughed a field one day, and next morning found the soil all replaced and smoothed over as if it had never been disturbed. This happened four times, and being greatly perplexed they decided to plough the field over once more and observe what happened. In the middle of the night while the brothers were watching, one on one side of the field and the other on the other side, they saw an old woman descend from heaven with a board in her hand, who, after replacing the clods of earth, smoothed them with the board. The elder brother at once shouted to the younger one to come and help him to kill the old woman who had undone all their work. But the younger brother suggested that they should first ask her why she did this and put them to so much trouble. So they

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538 Not only do the Miao sing and recite the old legends in verse, handed down from very early times, but they are also, or at least some of them are, great story-tellers. Some of these stories I took down from the dictation of my Miao teacher. They are not like Chinese stories, which are moral or immoral—mostly moral. Miao stories are not moral, but if we should say they were immoral, it might suggest a wrong opinion of them. We might, I think, call them unmoral, for they do not teach or illustrate the beauty of filial piety, loyalty, truthfulness, or any other moral excellence. In their stories one or more persons are clumsily crafty, and other persons are preternaturally simple. It is the crafty or lying people who always come off best, to the confusion of all honest and simple folk. That sort of thing amuses them immensely.

Some of their stories profess to explain in an amusing, if not satisfactory, way how certain things happen to be as they are. We have mentioned already how the Miao explain why they have no written characters, and why the sun rises when the cock crows. We shall now give a couple of short stories told to explain certain facts in natural history, which may interest our readers.

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The Dog, the Cat, the Rat, and the Sheep

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"Once upon a time the dog and the cat agreed to be cousins. The dog said, 'We two have now agreed to be cousins, there must be no stealing between us.' The cat replied, 'We shall steal other people's things; we two are kinsfolk, how can we rob one another?'

"Not long afterwards the dog took off his horns, and putting them on one side, stooped down to lick the inside of a stone mortar. In a little time he straightened himself, looked around, and not seeing his horns, said to the cat, 'Have you seen my horns?' The cat replied, 'I have not seen them. I certainly do not look after your horns for you.'

"The dog searched everywhere, but could not find them, and meeting the rat, he asked if he had seen them. The rat answered, 'I know where they are.' 'Well,' said the dog, 'you tell me where they are.' The rat replied, 'Your cousin the cat has stolen your horns and put them in a cupboard.' The dog went to the cupboard and found it was shut, so he said to the rat, 'You get in and bring them out for me.' The rat inquired what reward he should get for doing this, and the dog replied, 'When I eat anything, you shall eat with me.'

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538 "So the rat gnawed a hole in the cupboard, and dragged out the horns with his teeth. As he was doing this the cat saw him, and snatched them away. The dog thereupon pursued the cat, and the cat made off to the top of a tree. The dog at the foot of the tree cried out, 'Beat him!' The cat at the top of the tree said, 'I'm not afraid.' When it was dark the dog went home, and the cat, coming down from the tree, gave the horns to the sheep.

"And now the cat worries the rat, and the dog likes to chase the sheep and bite them. So instead of friendship there is enmity between them all, because of things that happened long ago."

The Swallow and the Toad

"In old times the rice plant bore grain from the bottom to the top of the stalk. This just suited the swallow, but the toad did not like it. 'It would be well,' said he, 'if instead of one harvest in the year there were three harvests per annum.' 'No,' said the swallow, 'it would be better if one harvest yielded enough for three years.' 'That,' objected the toad, 'would be very bad.' 'How would it be very bad?' asked the swallow. 'Because,' replied the toad, 'the ground would be overgrown with

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weeds.' 'But,' urged the swallow, 'the weeds would be very convenient, we could rest in the shade of them.' 'You only think of yourself,' said the toad. 'Well,' asked the swallow, 'how would it be bad for you?' 'I prefer,' said the toad, 'that there should be three harvests every year; thus there would be no weeds, and the snakes would not be able to seize me.' 538

"The swallow, however, would not agree to any such arrangement, and so they quarrelled.

"'You go,' suggested the swallow to the toad, 'and make an accusation against me.' 'Accuse you!' cried the toad; 'yes, I certainly shall go and accuse you.' The swallow thought the toad would be a long time on the road, so he said to the toad, 'You go first. I'll come along at my leisure.'

"The toad, however, was clever. He took a piece of wood and threw it in the water, and getting upon the piece of wood he floated quickly down with the stream. In this way he was the first to arrive before the king.

"The king asked him what he came about, and the toad replied, 'I have come to make an accusation.' 'Concerning what matter,' inquired the king, 'do you wish to make an accusation?' 'I desire,' said the toad, 'that

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538 there should be three crops every year to supply the year's need. The swallow will not agree to this, and says he prefers that one year's crop should suffice for three years. I say that thus the ground would be overgrown with weeds, and the snake would come and eat me. So we quarrelled over it, and the swallow beat me.'

"Thereupon the king allowed the claim of the toad that every year there should be three crops, and the toad returned to his home.

"Later on the swallow, having delayed and amused himself on the way, arrived. The king asked him, 'What have you come about?' The swallow replied, 'I have come to make an accusation.' 'Concerning what matter,' demanded the king, 'do you wish to make an accusation?' 'I desire,' said the swallow, 'that one harvest should suffice for three years. The toad will not consent to this, and he beat me, so I have come to accuse him.'

"'But,' said the king, 'the matter is already decided. You will find it recorded here. You can read it.'

"The swallow, seeing the toad's claim was allowed, kept on protesting, whereupon the king with his hand hit the swallow on the top of the head, and ever since the top of the swallow's head has been flat."

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

VIII. LEGENDS

538 It has already been stated that much of the history and folklore of the Ch'uan Miao has been put into verse from and is sung or chanted by the men and women on various occasions so that they are handed down as songs from generation to generation. There are of course some legends that are not in verse form and are not sung and much of the past history of the group has been lost, but there seems to be no poetry among these people that is not sung or chanted.

It is a well-known fact that the stories spread from group to group and that some stories have spread over most of the world. No doubt some of the Ch'uan Miao legends and stories have been learned from other cultural groups, but many have originated among the Ch'uan Miao themselves. There are old men and women who know hundreds of these legends and songs and gladly teach them to younger people. It is said, however, that many of the young folk are not learning them so that in a few generations they may be forgotten. This will be a real loss for they reflect the history, experiences, customs, ideals, and presuppositions of the people.

538 Among the great variety of songs and legends one is
173 historical. There are occasionally to be found in these stories bits of history that have not been recorded in any book. One story tells of the final defeat of the Miao in Kiangsi Province. According to this legend, the Chinese then had guns and cannon. I myself heard the old Ch'uan Miao sing this legend and took it down sentence by sentence as it was translated into Chinese for me by a Ch'uan Miao friend. Those who sang and translated the song knew very little about Kwangtung and Kiangsi Provinces. Another legend tells of a forced migration to Szechwan with their hands tied behind their backs. Still another tells of the settlement of the first Ch'uan Miao at Wang Wu Chai 王武寨. Going farther back into history, there are legends that indicate that their ancestors lived in a land where there were Chinese and also camels; this land surely must have been in North China. There are legends that say, "My ancestors lived in a hot southern climate," and describe conditions that point to a land in the south beyond the frontiers of China. There are stories that reflect conditions in a late neolithic age, or at least an age before metal was in common use, as for instance the story of the man who killed a bear by striking it with a stone axe. One very interesting story tells how monkeys lost their tails by sitting on them and so gradually became men.

The legend about the defeat of the Miao by the Chinese in Kwangtung is as follows:—

"The heavens are empty, the earth is small. The Chinese arose and fought us Miao. When we heard this evil news, when the Chinese reached Kwangtung, they brought cannon

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

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and guns and we were much afraid. When they had conquered Kiangsi, the Miao T'ien Ho 天火 (fire from heaven) blew his bugle, and Earth Fire 地火 took up his sword and curved bows and mustered soldiers as far as the horizon. The Chinese in attacking the Miao towns fought rapidly, attacking quickly, and even chickens and dogs were frightened. The Miao soldiers went and fought them but the Chinese broke open the Miao cities. The Chinese soldiers, when they saw the Miao soldiers covering the surrounding hills, were unable to hold back the Miao soldiers and fled and took refuge on the cliffs. The Chinese used a trick, making boats and chariots, filling them with soldiers, and came again to fight the Miao. The Miao were then defeated. The Chinese took possession of the Miao land and ordered the Miao to make them three thousand bows and arrows. The Miao could not oppose them and took refuge in caves."

It is not impossible that the migration of the Ch'uan Miao to Szechwan occurred under Yung Chêng 雍正 about the year 1733.

There is a legend that seems to imply a blood relationship between the Chinese and the Miao. It states that originally the Chinese and the Miao were one family. They were two brothers. The Miao was the older, the more powerful and the more respected brother and the Chinese was the younger. The parents died and were buried. The brothers separated and lost all trace of each other. They both commemorated their ancestors at the same grave but at different times so that they did not meet. The younger brother, the Chinese, worshipped later in the year, so that the older brother noticed that somebody was worshipping at the grave of his parents. "Who is doing this and for what reason?" he asked. Then he began to watch and caught the younger brother. A disagreement ensued. They did not recognize each other so each blamed the other for worshipping at his ancestral grave. Instead of fighting, they went to law about it. The official asked the Miao, "What evidence have you that this is your ancestral grave?" He replied, "I have buried a millstone a certain distance to the right of the grave." He asked the younger brother the same question. He answered, "I have buried a brass gong a certain distance to the left of the grave." The official sent men to dig and found both the millstone and the gong. Then it became known that the two men were brothers. But in the centuries that followed the descendants of the two brothers grew apart and forgot their common ancestry so that the Chinese have forgotten it altogether. Moreover, the Chinese descendants have become more and more powerful and numerous so that the Miao are now the younger and weaker brothers and the Chinese are the older and stronger brothers.

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

538 173 There is a variation of this legend which states that when the two brothers first separated they took a brass gong and broke it in two, each brother burying his piece near the grave. Later, at the official investigation, the two parts fitted together, proving their common ancestry.

The Ch'uan Miao trace their ancestry to a female ancestor called Na Bo Hmo Ntsə or the Miao mother named Ntsə.

One legend is that of P'an Ku 盤古, a great superman who with his hammer and chisel carved out the sky and the earth. The Chinese also have this legend and it is a question whether the Miao learned it from the Chinese or the Chinese from the Miao. An interesting fact is that this was not a creation of original materials but a shaping of the sky and the earth out of substances that already existed.

Savina found among the Miao of Tongkin the Biblical story of the flood, the tower of Babylon, the confusion of tongues, and a migration across northern Asia, finally reaching Tongkin. I have always suspected that the Miao of Tongkin learned these stories in recent times from Christian sources. I have not found the slightest trace of them among the Ch'uan Miao.

538 773 The story of the flood as I have learned it from Ch'uan Miao friends is as follows. Two brothers were hoeing a piece of land in order to plant a crop. Every morning when they returned to the field they found the soil turned back as it had been before they began work. One night, they kept watch to see who was doing this and saw an old man come onto the field and begin turning the soil back. When they asked for an explanation, the old man said, "It is useless for you to plant a crop. The world will be flooded and all the crops will be ruined and all the people will be drowned." Then they went and asked ʒe sʌu what to do about it. He advised each of them to make a large tub or barrel and to get into it when the flood arose. So the younger brother made a wooden tub and the older brother made one of iron. When the rains descended and the floods came, each brother got into his tub. The iron tub sank and the older brother was drowned but the wooden tub floated and so the younger brother was saved.

There is a variation of this story by which a brother and a sister were saved from the flood. There were no other people on earth, but they were brother and sister and had the same name, so it was not right for them to marry. They made three tests which finally proved to their satisfaction that it was the will of Ntsə that they should marry. One of these tests was the rolling of two round stones from opposite sides of a gulch or canyon. Their stopping together was a proof of the will of Ntsə that they should marry. Savina says that in the legend as he received it, it was not

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

538 773 clear whether the two stones were two round pieces of a stonegrinder or not. The Ch'uan Miao assured me that they were not two round pieces of a stone grinder but merely two round stones and that they rolled down from opposite hill-or mountain-sides, the opposite sides of a canyon.

Another kind of legend is that which gives an explanation for Ch'uan Miao customs. There are many of them and not a few of the customs here described were first learned about in a legend. As an illustration I will tell the story of the origin of raising chickens.

A man was walking through the woods. A pheasant flew out cackling and the man found some pheasant chicks. These he took home and fed and gradually they became very tame and grew up as pets. The family liked them so much that they did not kill them and eat them. When these chicks grew up they laid eggs and hatched out more chicks which in turn grew up. This family gave some of the fowl to other families and gradually people learned to raise chickens.

538 837 There are many love songs or songs that relate the experiences of lovers, for the Ch'uan Miao have had their share of Romeos and Juliets. Some of these songs tell of love between men and their wives or between men and women whom they love and wish to marry, but probably ninety percent of the love songs tell of love affairs between married men and women who are not their wives or between married women and men who are not their husbands, or between unmarried people who do not expect to get married, and in nearly all of these cases it is stated or implied that there was sexual intercourse between them. It seems to be assumed that love between the sexes will result in sexual intercourse and the pure love song that plays such a large part in the literature of the world is hard to find.

IX. RELIGION AND WORLD VIEW

771 In my opinion the Ch'uan Miao are a very religious people, but they have no religious organization, no images of gods, and no temples. Through their daily toil, by the help of their ancestors and the gods, and through their religious ceremonies, they hope to achieve a satisfying life in which the basal needs of food, sex, protection or security, and play and amusement are satisfied. Two of the fundamentals in the Ch'uan Miao religion are belief in demons which cause disease and other calamities and for whose exorcism ceremonies are required, and the ancestral cult with its ceremonial offerings and commemoration.

[135 cont.]

627 After a decision is rendered in this fashion both parties would
773 show compliance and would not carry the case to the law courts. Although the mythology handed down from mouth to mouth does not have religious contents, it becomes a kind of prophecy to those people who hold everything pertaining to their ancestors in the highest respect. It is entirely due to this inherent respect for their ancestors that the ancestral myth is recounted before carrying out the punishment or at the time of settling a dispute. The idea is to employ the will of the ancestors to restrain the actions of their descendants. It is interesting to note that the mythology of the Sheng Miao, meant originally to inform posterity of the stories of their ancestors' life, has also assumed the corrective and preventive functions of law.

773 [136] The ancestral myth recorded by this writer consists
538 of three versions, which are scattered over every corner of the Sheng Miao area. Although these versions show some variance, they have the same origin. The original mythology of all ethnic groups is told in verses or songs so that they can be remembered easily by posterity. The first two versions of the ancestral myth are told by the Sheng Miao as prose stories due to the disappearance of the poetical versions in the course of time. The third version is a song sung by the Sheng Miao, and few indeed are those elders in the whole area who can sing the song in its entirety. It therefore still retains all its simple primitive character. The whole song has 488 lines and represents the pure myth of the Sheng Miao regarding the origin of man. The three versions are given as follows.

The First Version

539 There was an old woman who descended from heaven to the earth with a melon seed. She planted this seed on the top of a mountain range. After three days the seed sprouted and the vine extended to more than two feet. After seven days the melon plant covered the whole mountain, yielding many large melons. Among the melons there was the melon king so large that it could accommodate several dozen persons inside. It

[151 cont.]

157 the stranger who comes to visit him and who is completely safe
609 under his roof.

The "Méo" women are gay, mirthful, only slightly shy, especially when their confidence has been gained. (One may see in photo 128, Plate 43, a European woman in the midst of a group of "Méotes," who are showing a sometimes indiscreet curiosity regarding all that has to do with the details of costume and of coiffure of strangers from the Occident.)

562 The condition of the "Méo" women is rather hard. They share in the most difficult labor.

836 The young women are not distinguished by an excess of virtue, but this fact is considered of little importance by the "Méo."

526 The young boys and the young men greatly honor exercises of skill and strength and often compete with one another in carrying heavy burdens or in racing over the mountains.

[152] The various dialects used by the "Méo" are monosyllabic.
193 As among the "Man-ta-pan" the qualifying word is placed before the noun, the subject before the verb, the direct object after the indirect.

197 It is likely that in their country of origin each "Méo" tribe used a special dialect. Among the tribes settled in Tonkin, who are very much mixed together, the dialects, which are not fixed by any writing, seem to blend together by regions and to be used in each of these regions by all the "Méo" tribes who dwell there.

[198] Almost all the "Méo" use the "kouan-hoa" as the language of
212 commerce. Literate persons are very rare. Those who know a few
[871] characters pronounce them in the Chinese fashion. The "Méo" are beginning to send their children to the schools that are being conducted in our frontier posts located at the high altitudes. For their
[648] dealings with the authorities and for writing their rare letters, they have recourse to the help of a literate Chinese.

538 The "Méo" have no written literature, but they know narra-
[533] tives, prayers, and some songs, which they sing in a monotonous, sad tone. They show little imagination, much simplicity and sometimes even triviality, for they particularly extol the material joys of life, of the table, and of love, the sole pleasures of a race whose

[152 cont.]

538 lot is otherwise so hard. Below are given two extracts from "Méo" songs, borrowed from the work of P. Marabail (op. cit., pp. 296 and 298):

539 892 1. Love song:

The Young Man. — One is born only once. As the bee and the butterfly go far off in search of flowers, so human creatures are obliged to make long journeys to seek out those beings with whom they should unite. In like fashion we two are of different villages and yet we are about to wed. It is Heaven that has so willed it, He who is just and is never mistaken.

The Young Woman. — No, we are like the reed and the plum tree, which are separated by long distances. Don't make fun of it in that way. But since you tell me of the example of the bees, we have only to follow it. Wait for me then this evening at nightfall and I shall take care not to miss the rendezvous.

2. Prayer:

May we have an abundant harvest of maize! May the 539 wind blow with moderation and the rain fall with regularity! Then 782 more than a hundred plants will give rich harvests. Thus the mandarins will have a tranquil people to rule. Oh, that these desires may be completely realized! Let us beat the drum to celebrate autumn.

The costume of the men scarcely varies from one tribe to an- 291 other (see photo 204, Plate 38, in which representatives of various "Méo" tribes of Upper Tonkin appear). It consists of a jacket which buttons [153] usually in front of the right shoulder as well as on the side, and goes down just below the hips, a long pantaloon falling to the feet and held up by a belt, a turban of variable size, wrapped in a haphazard fashion.

Among those tribes which are in direct contact with the Chinese, [177] the masculine costume approaches that of the Chinese, the jacket buttons in front by means of a variable number of braided loops and buttons and the turban is often replaced by a small skullcap.

The "Méo" usually go about barefooted. Some wear sandals with soles of rattan or bamboo fiber, or even the Chinese heelless

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/83 cont./

A M 857 [534] [538] may happen that a father gives his child a simple tube flute /Stabflöte/ or a whistle. Otherwise there is no art in the life of the children which is not also practiced by the adults. I did not find nursery rhymes or fairy tales; /84/ singing, however, plays a great role in the life of the Meau children, while among the Akha instead of this it is dancing (see the chapter, "Art," section on "Dancing").

M 533 M [868] [535] The Meau mother sings her baby to sleep and in doing so tells it about the work in the fields; the father or the older brothers, however, sing different songs to the boys, especially the old love songs. Not until they are about fourteen years old do they learn the dances, which are closely tied in with the cult (see the chapter, "Art," section on "Dancing").

A 535 857 868 It is otherwise among the Akha, among whom dancing plays an important role even at the earliest age. I repeatedly saw three-year-old girls trying to imitate the dances of the adults. As soon as the children are to the slightest degree physically able to do it, they dance with devotion and persistence and try to learn all the details of the dances. The adults do not support them in this endeavor; they do not teach them and do not correct their mistakes; instead, the older children guide the younger ones and make them aware of their mistakes. The children's marked talent for imitation is very helpful in this.

A M 532 Plastic representations are unknown to the Meau (see the chapter, "Art," section on "Painting, Sculpture, Ornamentation"). It is therefore amazing that the children, though they never see products of this form of art activity, are nevertheless able to make human and animal figures out of clay (Ill. 65).[1] The same is true of the Akha children who do not see any sculpture except the wooden figures standing before the entrances to the villages (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," the section on "Deities and Spirits").

[1] [See cat 116, P471 - ANALYST]

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/143 cont./

A M 533 [832] [854] sung, such as the examples given above, are customary among the Akha as well as among the Meau, but always between the different sexes. During them they often hold hands for hours and look into each other's eyes. Solo singing, on the other hand, is done at every possible opportunity, for instance, when the mother rocks her baby to sleep, when the father carries his son around on his back.

Polyphonic singing in our sense is unknown; unison-singing A [535] [832] is practiced only by the Akha and exclusively by the girls during their wooing dances. Several girls always sing and dance simultaneously (Ill. 24)[1] and thereby attract the attention of the A M [177] young men at the dancing places with their erotic songs. Songs or melodies are in no case borrowed from neighboring tribes.

All these observations show that both tribes, but especially the Meau, are artistically talented in various directions, which has already been said in the section on "Art in the Life of the Children" (the chapter, "Life in the Community"). When M 114 533 ●538 Dhuraratsadorn (3) writes that "the Meau do not know any

3. Page 132.

stories or fairy tales, and have no /144/ special liking for singing or poetry, it can only be the result of some misunderstanding (see also the chapter, "Myths and Fairy Tales").

Musical Instruments

M 534 [533] That the Meau love music can be seen from their predilection for singing. Moreover, they have musical instruments and use gongs, rattles, and wind instruments. Their love of music is confirmed by Lajonquière (1), as well as by

1. II, p. 311.

M [237] [114] [171] Abadie (2). The latter also speaks of a small long-necked

2. Page 168.

1 [See card 116, p 124 - ANALYST]

/219 cont./

A 784 All these prohibitions are in force for all the Akha who are in a situation connected with a taboo, for instance, pregnancy or sickness. There is no taboo that embraces social or political groups.

Every taboo is strictly observed. Transgression do occur, of course, but only through carelessness. The transgressor always A [688] [787] [756] hastens to the shaman and immediately tells him what has happened, whereupon the shaman questions the offended spirit as to the form of expiation required of the transgressor.

The prohibition that strangers may not walk about alone A 123 609 784 in the village borders on taboo. I was told that such an act offends the spirits, whose wrath is then felt, not by the stranger, but by the inhabitants of the village. I had the impression, however, that this was more a pretext to prevent our investigations in the villages, since it was apparently disagreeable to the Akha A [126] to be watched by us. I therefore, for example, had to take my photographs with telescopic Tessar lenses from a great distance.

A 178 784 [756] If one tries to obtain an explanation for the taboos, the answer is always: "Because the spirits wish it and our /220/ ancestors did so." The prohibitions were therefore handed down from ancient times and cannot be modified or moderated by the shamans, just as they likewise do not have the power to create new taboos.

A 779 As numerous as the taboo rules are, the Akha, too, do not have any totemistic conceptions in any form.

/221/

Chapter 10

Myths and Fairy Tales

M 114 ●538 773 Undoubtedly myths and fairy tales must be present in considerable numbers among all the mountain peoples of Farther India. Nevertheless, relatively few became known to me from the Meau in Thailand, and even in the literature I was able to find little about the fund of Meau myths.

/221 cont./

182 Especially among a people as mentally alert and of such
538 high standing as the Meau, one can probably see in this fact an
773 indication that we have here an economically-conditioned cultural loss. Poetry, like every free artistic activity, requires not only mental ability, but also security in the basic conditions of life. That the mental ability in any case is present among the Meau is attested to, in addition to the communications from Savina, by both the mental development of the children and, above all, the spiritual culture which both the Meau and the Akha have developed. People who need all their strength in order merely, with the hardest work, to avoid starvation, however, cannot possibly have the energy required for poetic invention. Traditional lore maintains itself longer, but it, too, disappears if there is not sufficient time and leisure to cultivate it.

773 Nevertheless, among the Meau in Thailand I was able to
[184] record a number of legends which often are identical to a great extent with the corresponding myths and tales that other authors have recorded among the Meau in Tonkin. Accordingly, I am presenting the recorded material in the grouping most useful for comparative purposes. Concerning /222/ the origin of the human race, the following was reported to me:

In the beginning the earth was flooded by the ocean. When the water had gradually created its own pathways and earth became visible, a pair of siblings was living there. The brother impregnated the sister, and she gave birth to a gourd, which instead of seeds contained germ cells from which, in the course of time, human beings developed.

539 Lajonquière (1) and Abadie (2) also describe this episode,

1. II, p. 314.

2. Page 168.

but these authors state that the Meau have knowledge of the Deluge and the siblings were the only survivors of this natural catastrophe. Savina (3) also described the creation of human beings:

3. II, p. 244.